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B4 COLOR NIAGARA EDITION
THE BUFFALO NEWS / SUNDAY, AUGUST 20, 2006
CITY & REGION

# Hair-raising rock 'n' roll from Blue Oyster Cult

BY JEFF MIERS
NEWS POP MUSIC CRITIC

CONCERT REVIEW
**Blue Oyster Cult**
Friday night at the Erie County Fair Grandstand.

They've been called, forever, "the thinking man's rock 'n' roll band," and it's a title that fits more than might seem immediately apparent.

Blue Oyster Cult — which played a sterling show Friday night at the Erie County Fair — brought an intelligence, a virtuosity, a group of cool friends (Patti Smith, Richard Meltzer, Sandy Pearlman), and a sense of the bizarre to hard rock in the '70s. After all this time, the band still packs plenty of wallop, and is as thrillingly strange as ever.

This was a free show at the fair's grandstand. It was extremely well-attended. In fact, it was completely packed with serious rock fans, folks who knew every tune the band played and clearly appreciated the brilliant performance.

B.O.C., as the group is known to the faithful, dug deep for a set that gratified both fans and band. It was a study in the continued resonance of guitar-based rock. Some call it "classic rock," some " '70s rock," but what it really comes across as is timeless rock 'n' roll played by a bunch of New York intellectuals who also happen to be top-notch musicians.

The set opened with deep cuts, and deep cuts remained the theme of the evening. "The Red & the Black" was aimed straight for the heart of the true fan, and hit. "OD'd on Life Itself" followed, and by this time, the packed and rowdy house was fully in the grasp of the band.

The group in its 2006 guise consists of three of its founding members — guitarist/vocalist Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser, guitarist/keyboardist Allen Lanier, and vocalist/guitarist Eric Bloom — and a newly recruited rhythm section consisting of bassist Richie Castellano and drummer Jules Radino. The original rhythm section of brothers Albert and Joe Bouchard had much to do with the formation of the B.O.C. sound, but even in their absence, the group kicked it hard.

Much of the group's power comes from the extremely under-rated guitarist Roeser, who is an influential, passionate and unique soloist. Buck has developed into a compelling player.

The set list continued to astound, as the group ran through "Burning for You," "E.T.I. (Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence)," "Shooting Shark," "ME 262," "The Golden Age of Leather," and of course, the inimitable Byrds-like slice of melodic genius "Don't Fear the Reaper."

The high points were killer solos from Buck and Lanier, and in particular, the epic slab of brilliance "Then Came the Last Days of May," during which Roeser played an absolutely hair-raising solo. This was no mere showboating; it was adventurous, brave, ambitious soloing from one of the great guitarists to emerge from the '70s.

The band was clearly happy with the reaction from the full house and played a few extra tunes — "Black Blade" killed, and the early nugget "Hot Rails to Hell" did the same.

This was an outstanding show. Clearly, age means nothing. B.O.C. has only improved with time, despite the absence of the Bouchard brothers.

e-mail: jmiers@buffnews.com



Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News
**Toby Keith plays to a packed crowd at Darien Lake's Performing Arts Center on Friday in a concert that showed his love for trucks.**

# Toby Keith only too glad to keep on truckin' at Darien Lake concert

BY BENJAMIN SIEGEL
NEWS CONTRIBUTING REVIEWER

CONCERT REVIEW
**Toby Keith**
With Joe Nichols on Friday night at Six Flags Darien Lake Performing Arts Center.

DARIEN CENTER — Nothing gets between Toby Keith and his Ford F-150. Nothing.

This big boy sure likes his trucks, so much so that he wrote a song about it. It's called "Big Ol' Truck."

I'm afraid the Keith oeuvre doesn't get any deeper than that.

His packed concert at Darien Lake Performing Arts Center on Friday night was proof that when it comes to country music, sometimes all you need is a beer, a big-chested lady friend and, well, a bag of truck.

I'm a fan of country music — the kind of country that's about the people of our country, and the heritage of its land. Not the kind that throws misogynistic and homophobic slurs out there as an impetus to get your truck — or your horse, as it were — all revved up and ready for a day of cattle pullin' and whiskey sluggin'.

Don't get me wrong. This brand of classic country rock isn't without its musical merits. It's fun at times, great to dance to with your buddies — the big hit, "Get Drunk and Be Somebody," almost made me want to — and it's not without its patriotic spirit.

I'll put it this way: I'm glad I didn't wear my pink Polo shirt.

Keith opened his show — really, it was a fire and confetti spectacle as much as it was a country concert — with a video skit in which he is pitched a number of television deals by Hollywood executives. One proposes a reality show, another a sumo wrestling competition. The winning pitch is a game show in which the singer gets contestants to lift a heavy metal weight with the hitch on his Ford pickup.

He chooses the male contestant wearing a pink shirt, to less. The pink-shirted man successfully pulls the metal weight up to the top of the set, only to be pushed out of the truck by Keith.

"No man with a pink shirt or a manicure drives my truck!" he says. The projection screen drops, and there's Keith stepping out of a prop vehicle. Let the games begin.

But the rest of the night was about the twangy tunes. It was about beautiful women. It was about a sort of thick green fire — part of the pyrotechnics — that I'm not sure isn't illegal in a few states. It was about horses. It was about showmanship.

And it was about trucks.

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Movie Passes for Two
Patty Kushner of Blasdell had the secret word and wins the $100 Jackpot.
1ST PRIZE
Trip for two to London, Ontario plus $200 cash
2ND PRIZE
Splash Lagoon Prize Package

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